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Company Agrees to Policy Changes in Settlement of Sexual Harassment Suit

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Aug. 23, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced a settlement resolving a lawsuit against GC Services Limited Partnership over allegations that two of its former employees were subjected to a sexually offensive and hostile work environment.

Julia Carman, 33, now living in Florida, and Tamara Thomas, 38, of Phoenix, worked for GC Services as account representatives performing collections work. GC Services is a Houston-based company that operates call centers throughout the United States helping companies with debt collection, customer service assistance and other business needs. GC Services has more than 10,000 employees nationwide.

The settlement resolves allegations that a male supervisor and several male co-workers made numerous sexually offensive comments that resulted in a hostile work environment for Carman and Thomas. According to court documents, Carman and Thomas neither welcomed nor solicited the sexual remarks made in the office.

The lawsuit alleged that the women complained to GC Services management about the comments, but the company did not take steps to stop the employees who were engaging in the harassment. Carman and Thomas left the company in May 2004, citing a hostile work environment. While Thomas was not the target of the comments or conduct, she was witness to the behavior. Both women filed complaints with the Civil Rights Division of the Attorney General's Office.

"This settlement is a good outcome for all GC Services employees," Goddard said. "GC Services must establish a company-wide anti-harassment policy that will apply to the 10,000 employees working in call centers throughout the country."

The settlement, approved by Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Ruth Hilliard, requires the company to:

- Develop a company-wide comprehensive anti-harassment policy that meets numerous requirements set out in the Consent Decree and provide the policy to all of its employees throughout the country.

- Appoint an appropriate and qualified employee and alternate employee who will be responsible for investigating complaints of harassment, determining when discipline for harassment is necessary and developing a system for evaluating whether managers are complying with anti-discrimination laws.
- Arrange for the designated employees to be trained on how to effectively conduct workplace harassment investigations.
- Train all of its Arizona employees about the new anti-harassment policy, including the company's commitment to a workplace free of harassment and how to complain internally if harassment occurs.
- Pay the Civil Rights Division \$1,875 to monitor the company's compliance with the Consent Decree for the next 18 months.

According to court documents, the company entered into a separate agreement with Carman and Thomas to pay an undisclosed amount to settle their claims.

The Attorney General's Office enforces the Arizona Civil Rights Act, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age or the results of genetic testing. If you believe you are a victim of employment discrimination or harassment, contact the Civil Rights Division of the Attorney General's Office to file a complaint at 602-542-5263 in Phoenix or 520-628-6500 in Tucson. You may also visit one of the Attorney General's Satellite Offices. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov.

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